

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 DHA-02 ORM-02 IO-10 /077 W

----- 060410

R 301018Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6158

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 26962

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, TH, LA

SUBJ: THAI-LAO BORDER REMAINS CLOSED

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION BANGKOK INFO VIENTIANE CHIANG MAI

FM UDORN DEC 30 RPTD FOR YOUR I FO:

UDORN 2270

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, TH, LA

SUBJECT: THAI-LAO BORDER REMAINS CLOSED

1. PRESS REPORTS THAT THE BORDER WOULD REOPEN TODAY (DEC. 29) TO PERMIT TRANSPORTATION OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES TO VIENTIANE PROVED FALSE. OFFICIALS IN NONG KHAI PROVINCE SAID THAT GOVERNOR KAMPOL KLINSUKHON HAS NOT RECEIVED ORDERS TO OPEN THE BORDER. NATHANAT BOONYAKHINIT, CHIEF IMMIGRATION OFFICER AT THA BO, AND SUWIMON PHANGON, PROVINCIAL DEFENSE OFFICER, TOLD CONSULATE POLITICAL ASSISTANT THE GOVERNOR TURNED DOWN A REQUEST FROM THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN VIENTIANE TO ALLOW TWENTY TRUCKS BELONGING TO THE THAI EXPRESS TRANSPORTATION ORGANIZATION (ETO) TO CROSS FROM THAILAND INTO LAOS IN ORDER TO TRANSPORT SUPPLIES OUT OF VIENTIANE. THEY OFFERED NO

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SPECULATION AS TO WHAT KIND OF CARGO THE FRENCH HAD PLANNED -1

,3\$ 59 #80, BUT DID SAY THERE WERE TWENTY EMPTY ETO TRUCKS STANDING BY READY TO CROSS THE RIVER. THE ETO OFFICE IN NONG KHAI CONFIRMED THIS REPORT.

2. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE RECENT EXODUS OF WORLD TRAVELERS FROM VIENTIANE, THIS IS THE FIRST SIGN OF PRESSURE ON THE RTG TO OPEN THE BORDER FOR TRAFFIC FROM, RATHER THAN TO, LAOS. THE GOVERNOR REPORTEDLY DENIED THE REQUEST BECAUSE HE FELT THE TRUCKS WOULD BE STOPPED WHILE RETURNING TO THAILAND. THE DEFENSE TFFICER FEARED THE PL WOULD USE THE THAI TRUCKS AS A BARGAINING CHIP TO DEMAND THE COMPLETE REOPENING OF THE BORDER. ONE LAO

TRUCK CARRYING THREE CRATES OF FRENCH SUPPLIES WAS PERMITTED TT ENTER THAILAND TODAY. AT PRESENT, WE HAVE NO INFORMATION AS TO WHETHER THESE CROSSINGS WILL BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE.

3. WHEN THE BORDER IS REOPENED TO PERMIT SUPPLIES TO ENTER VIENTIANE, THE SOVIETS AND THE CHINESE WILL ALSO RESUME SHIPMENTS TO LAOS. ETO OFFICIALS I NONG KHAI ESTIMATE THEY ARE CURRE TLY STOCKPILING 7,100 KILOS OF RICE FOR THE PRC AND 28 TRUCKLOADS OF BICYCLES AND PAPER FOR THE RUSSIANS; ALL DESTINED FOR VIE TIANE. THE ASSIS- TANT MANGER OF THE TRAIN STATION IN NONG KHAI REPORTS THERE ARE SIX CARLOADS OF POWDERED MILK AND BICYCLE PARTS FROM THE USSR AWAITING SHIPMENT TO LAOS.

4. REFUGEES CONTINUE TO CROSS DESPITE THE CLOSED BORDER. UNHCR OFFICIAL SAID AN AVERAGE OF 50 A DAY ENTER NONG KHAI PROVINCE (DOWN FROM 150 A DAY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE KING'S ABDICATION). THE THAI ARREST AND FINE THE REFUGEES, BUT MOST SPEND NO MORE THAN A DAY OR TWO IN JAIL BEFORE GOING TO THE NONG KHAI CAMP. THE GOVERNOR HAS PUBLICLY THREATENED TO GET TOUGH AND "ENLARGE THE PRISONS", AND THERE HAVE BEEN RUMORS THAT WHEN THE BORDER RE-OPENS SOME REFUGEES MAY BE DEPORTED. TO DATE HOWEVER, THERE IS NO HARD EVIDENCE OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THAI REFUGEE POLICY. HAMILTON MASTERS

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